

### **LISTING OF THE CLAIMS**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

#### **WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. (Previously Amended) A method of providing access to a wireless communications system in which a plurality of nodes in a first set establish wireless links with wireless units located in geographic proximity to said nodes, said method comprising the steps of:

- receiving information characterizing usage level of nodes of a second set;
- using said information by a node of said first set to determine a first node of said second set with which to connect; and
- connecting said node of said first set with said first node of said second set.

Claims 2 – 4 are cancelled.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said using step uses said information characterizing usage levels of the nodes of the second set and information characterizing said node of said first set to determine a node of said second set with which to connect.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said using step uses said information characterizing usage level of the node of the second set and information characterizing a wireless unit for which a connection is being established.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said step of connecting further comprising connecting said node of said first set with a second node of said second set.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said step of connecting further comprising:

connecting said node of said first set with said first node of said second set for establishing a connection with a first wireless unit; and

connecting said node of said first set with a second node of said second set for establishing a connection with a second wireless unit.

9. (Cancelled).

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 comprising the steps of:

receiving information by said node of said first set from said nodes of said second set using a multicast address associated with said nodes of said second set;

maintaining a list by said node of said first set of nodes of said second set based on said information; and

using said list by said node of said first set to determine said first node of said second set with which to connect.

11. (Previously Amended) A radio access system in a wireless communications system comprising:

a plurality of nodes in a first set adapted to establish wireless links with wireless units located in geographic proximity to said nodes;

a connection network coupled to said plurality of nodes of said first set;

a plurality of nodes of a second set coupled to said connection network adapted to provide connections between a node of said plurality of nodes of said first set and said plurality of nodes of said second set; and

processing circuitry adapted to receive information characterizing usage levels of the nodes of the second set and to use said information to determine a node of said second set to connect with said node of said first set.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11 wherein said processing circuitry adapted to use information including usage level of the nodes of the second set and to use information including nodes of said second set to determine said node of said second set with which to connect.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11 wherein said processing circuitry is adapted to use said information characterizing usage levels of the nodes of the second set and information characterizing said node of said first set to determine said node of said second set.

16. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11 wherein said processing circuitry is adapted to use said information characterizing usage levels of the nodes of the second set and information characterizing a wireless unit for which a connection is being established to determine said node of said second set.

17. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11 wherein said radio access system adapted to connect a node of said first set with a first node of said second set and to connect said node of said first set with a second node of said second set.

18. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11 wherein said radio access system further adapted to connect a node of said first set with a first node of said second set of base station controllers for establishing a connection with a first wireless unit and to connect said node of said first set with a second node of said second set for establishing a connection with a second wireless unit.

19. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11 wherein said processing circuitry being at said node of said first set and being adapted to receive information characterizing usage levels of said nodes of said second set and to use said information by said processing circuitry to determine said node of said second set with which to connect said node of said first set.

20. (Original) The system of claim 19 wherein said processing circuitry further adapted to receive information from nodes of said second set using a multicast address associated with said nodes of said second set, to maintain a list of nodes of said second set based on said information, and to use said list to determine said node of said second set with which to connect said node of said first set.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein establishing the wireless links between the nodes of the first set with the wireless units located in geographic proximity to said nodes is through a connection network.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21 wherein said connection network is an internet protocol (IP) based network.

23. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11 wherein said connection network is an internet protocol (IP) based network.